

those is an area that I'm sure that Senator Hilgert is interested in and so I'm going to quickly turn to Senator Hilgert and give him a little time.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Hilgert.

SENATOR HILGERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Senator Vrtiska, members. Yes, there is an idea that I wanted to advocate. It is technically covered by Nebraska Partnerships, LB 144, but I think the application process is very poorly drafted. I think that there could have been more outreach to the urban centers, as far as making this program available. I certainly have done everything I can do in sending this application packet with explanation into my district. I did want to expand this to also include micro enterprises which is the most dynamic job-producing sector of the Nebraska economy, and we did have a program in LB 1033 which failed to advance this year, concerning providing micro loans from \$100 to \$25,000 which are traditionally prohibitively expensive for the private sector to handle. Again, I wanted to thank Senator Vrtiska for including me in this amendment. We will be back next year to...hopefully be back next year, to encourage more urban collaboration to integrate more micro enterprise programs to fund this program adequately and, hopefully, to also make it more clear than it is in this present application packet, as far as its availability to the urban areas of this state. We need to do more for micro enterprise program. I would remind the body, too, that the small business is the highest expanding sector, and it's a good investment for our economic development dollars. Senator Vrtiska, I'll yield back to you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Hilgert. I appreciate your taking the time this late in the evening to listen to what I...what we have to say and I, like Senator Hilgert, if I'm back next year, we've already made plans to expand on this, and with a lot of good luck, I'll be back here and talking about this same issue next year. With that, thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. It is withdrawn, is that correct?

SENATOR VRTISKA: Withdraw the amendment.